



# *The* AGATE LAMP

LAURA F. BEALL



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# THE AGATE LAMP





# THE AGATE LAMP

BY  
LAURA F. BEALL



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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
HIGH TIDE . . . . .	3
THE GRIEVING FAUN . . . . .	4
IMPOSTORS . . . . .	6
ON THE HEATH . . . . .	10
THE GHOST . . . . .	14
THE JUNKMAN . . . . .	15
A CHOPIN NOCTURNE . . . . .	17
SONG OF THE SNOW ELVES . . . . .	18
THE WHITE HORSE . . . . .	21
SUNDRY HOPES IN REGARD TO HEAVEN . . . . .	23
A BALLAD OF LOVE AND HATE . . . . .	28
THE BURIAL OF ATTLA . . . . .	32
TO ARIEL . . . . .	35
THE RECALL OF THE COCHRAN PLACKS . . . . .	37
QUEEN MARIE . . . . .	35
THE SERPENT CHARMER . . . . .	45
GRAMERCY . . . . .	48
JOYEUSE GARDE . . . . .	50
A NAME . . . . .	52
TRIBUTE . . . . .	54
THE VOYAGERS . . . . .	55
FORVYE SANDS . . . . .	58
A MINSTREL SINGS . . . . .	62
AVE MARIA . . . . .	63
VALE! . . . . .	65
IN THE MARKET-PLACE . . . . .	66
A BALLADE OF BEAUTIFUL HORSES . . . . .	68
AFTER READING KIT MARLOWE'S PLAYS . . . . .	70
MUCKLE-MOUTHED MEG . . . . .	72
SOLOMON'S ARMYE . . . . .	74
THE WEARY SOUL . . . . .	80
THE TROUBADOUR WOULD BE FORGIVEN HIS NEGLECT . . . . .	84



# THE AGATE LAMP



## HIGH TIDE

I cannot write when you are near; my blood  
Leaps to your look with the exultant trust  
Of moon mad tides, and all my ordered lines  
Dissolve like meteors in shining dust.

Yet I have never wished thee far. High tide  
Strews the wet sand with fine fantastic things  
Undreamed of else. And from the soul's abyss  
Strange thoughts and beautiful my passion flings.

THE GRIEVING FAUN

In a covert of the wood  
Where the whitest beeches stood,  
And spring's first wave of violets broke in purple spray  
Pondering the mystery  
Of an ancient misery,  
Sometimes sad and sometimes vexed,  
And by each changing mood perplexed,  
Couched on grasses lay  
A Faun. And from his lustrous eyes  
Dark with grieved surprise,  
Crystal tears stole down  
To mingle with the dew.  
"Why," he sobbed, "am I not bold  
And swift enough to seize and hold  
One of those Nymphs, as white and cold  
And fleeting as a rose of snow?  
I could weave poppies for a crown,  
I could bring nuts all sweet and brown,  
Whatever flower she loved to view  
I would find it where it grew;  
If she asked it I would go  
Through the midnight's starry trails  
To snatch moonbeams for her veils;



When the tide had left the sands  
Seek the deepest fluted shell,  
Or in the ocean's wildest flow  
Dive for pearls to heap her hands.  
Surely I could serve her well!  
But when I woo them they are fearful,  
Amazed, alarmed, and tearful,  
And they fly my eager arms  
Like a threat of awful harms,  
Listening not at all  
To the love words that I call.  
And when I, breathless, seem to clasp  
Them they are changed in my grasp,  
By a goddess of the woods they have ranged  
They are changed;  
Against my panting love torn breast  
A sullen rough barked tree is prest,  
Bruising me,  
Or a swift stream slips  
Past my hot and trembling lips  
To the sea."

IMPOSTORS

People have taken an imp of the streets,  
Verminous, filthy,  
Ignorant of handkerchiefs,  
Dressed in a tatter of odds and ends,  
To exhibit with strident admiration  
Under thy name  
O beautiful Eros,  
Under thy beautiful name.

Do you remember the garden wall,  
And the moon like a golden shield,  
The moon that you said was Achilles' shield ?  
The sleepy birds in the cedar trees,  
And the drowsy song  
When our laughter shattered their fragile dreams. . . .  
The lilies that flamed in the moonlight,  
Candles of snow for thee,  
Candles of love with a flame of snow,  
About thine altar, oh beautiful one. . . .

How you stood in the flooding moonlight,  
Crowned with roses, and gemmed with dew,  
With pansies crowding about your feet,  
And sang the songs of the gods,  
The songs of the youth of the world,  
The Kyrielle of beauty,  
The Gloria of love.

There is a girl from a charity school  
Whom they dress in white,  
High necked and very straight,  
But they might as well have left her as she was,  
For one thinks of checked gingham anyhow.  
She is snuffy and shifty eyed,  
And would steal an occasional trinket  
If she were braver.  
An obtrusive modesty of demeanor  
Stretches thinly over commonplace vileness of thought.  
People say they adore her,  
(Under thy name, O Eros!)  
But they seem a little uncomfortable  
When she is looked at closely.

## THE AGATE LAMP

Do you remember the long, hot days  
Under the quiet trees,  
Brooding their treasure of apple and plum? . . .  
The sharp rustle of the heavy headed grain,  
The drone of velvet kirtled bees,  
The endless song of insects in the grass,  
The sigh of a gentle sea,  
Kissing the land with delicate kisses. . . .  
Days without noise,  
Days without silences,  
Days like a woman lying in the arms of her lover,  
Warm and content,  
When the first keen rapture has spent itself,  
When every motion caresses,  
When every word is a sigh of love,  
And every breath is a loving word,  
And kisses fall between every breath. . . .  
Do you remember . . .  
How the song sparrow touched his little flute . . .  
Or was it a shepherd piping in Arcadia . . .  
Through long, hot days . . .  
Under the quiet trees. . . .

And they have worshipped one better than these,  
Perfumed at least, and with wit  
To be found at all hours unimpaired,  
Like a painted leopard's majestic pose.

But oh, the wild leap through the morning,  
The light that flashed on your bow  
Where it curves like your own rich brows,  
The maddening scent of the clover fields,  
And the songs from the bird-filled woods.

O Eros, do you remember?

Two thousand years and five hundred more,  
And back, and back, as you please beyond,  
With a laugh for every year.

You were young, you were young, oh first of the gods!

You are young today, most wonderful lord!

And those who think they are young,

Who number their years by tens,

They are old as the last dry leaf.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### ON THE HEATH

Chloris was riding toward London town,  
With feathered bonnet and satin gown;  
Coachman and footmen in liveries new,  
And ever at beck a maid or two.  
The men were stout, and a musket lay  
At the coachman's feet thro the livelong day,  
In case of robbers along the way.  
But Chloris was fearing them not at all,  
For her mind was busy with fête and ball,  
With triumphal rides thro the crowded park,  
With how to answer some lively spark,  
With the newest way to order her curls,  
With when she should first display her pearls;  
She wonders if Sir Amyntas is there,  
If Lady Lucilla is still so fair,  
What budding beauty is pressing most  
Toward the honours she holds as reigning toast;  
(Here she frowns in majestic disdain,  
But fearful of wrinkles soon smiles again.)



Out of the west where the sun is dying  
A horseman swerves like a falcon flying,  
A jewelled sword at his left side swung,  
Low from his hat brim a white plume hung,  
His velvet coat took a richer grace  
From cobweb ruffles of Flanders lace,  
And his slim black mare was as swift and free  
As ever a bird in the air could be.

One whistling note from a pistol ball  
And the quaking footmen for mercy call,  
The coachman trembles, the handmaids shriek,  
But a dimple flickers on Chloris' cheek.  
Ignorant Strength is quick to cower,  
But Loveliness seldom forgets her power.  
“ It seems, good sir, that I might complain,” —  
The rider bowed to his horse's mane,  
“ You cannot think, madam, if I had known  
That the queen of beauty rode here alone  
So rude a summons from me had flown?

THE AGATE LAMP

A country squire of bulging purse,  
Or a gossiping brace of dowagers,  
Might well be thankful to hear no worse;  
But tender indeed the music that seems  
A worthy intruder on *your* day dreams."

"Well, being thoroughly roused just now,  
What of my jewels?" smiled Chloris. "I vow  
If your demands keep pace with my fears  
I can only sparkle at court with tears."

"Could I endure that a tear should rise  
Thro fault of mine in such glorious eyes?  
An hundred gold pieces you'll hardly miss? —  
Tho it desolates me to ask for this!  
As for your jewels, their ransom shall be  
That you dance a coranto here with me."

Bow and curtsy, retreat, advance,  
Distance and measure, — "How well you dance!  
If ever to dance at court you care,  
I pledge myself, sir, your partner there."



Delicate steps in intricate maze,  
Down dropped lashes, and ardent gaze.  
“ I danced in the palace many a day  
Ere I left it to ride on the king's highway;  
I should find it now a dangerous place,  
But who would weigh danger 'gainst such a grace? ”  
With shining eyes, when the dance was o'er,  
She gives him her hand at the carriage door,  
So soft a hand it must twice be kissed,  
On taper fingers, and slender wrist.  
To his place each awestruck servant springs,  
Lightly to saddle the rider swings;  
With gilded coach and horses brown,  
Chloris is riding toward London town.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### THE GHOST

Swift as a great moth flying down the dark  
A wailing spirit fled to where  
His fellows waited, shrieking out, " O mark  
Me, brothers, lest you also dare  
Earth's horrors! I have seen a fearful thing."  
And when they questioned, " Did I boast  
Of love? " the spirit answered, shuddering,  
" 'Tis dead! I saw its dreadful ghost."

## THE JUNKMAN

I saw an old junkman  
Taking things away,  
And no one seemed to care,  
Or ever said stay,  
Or turned about to stare  
At his plundering.  
He took glorious songs,  
And the throats that sing;  
He took learning and labor,  
And courage and pride;  
Beauty and merriment  
Went in side by side.  
He flung a whole dynasty  
Into his cart,  
He crushed a strong city  
Like a gooseberry tart.  
He gathered up joy  
On his rusty spade  
As tho there were nothing  
To make him afraid.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

He tossed hope and genius  
Away like dry leaves,  
I saw him bind Love  
In horrible sheaves.  
Before I went away  
I asked him his name,  
And thought he answered "Time."  
His eyes were like flame,  
And everywhere he turned them  
Shot a sullen beam.  
But still the folk went dancing by  
Like figures in a dream.

## A CHOPIN NOCTURNE

Soft, soft as tears, but happy as the strain  
Of drowsy birds, as tho a minstrel sang  
At twilight — smiling when the echoes rang  
Like fairy laughter o'er the wind-stirred grain —  
Of some far golden land where cold disdain  
Comes not, lost hopes, nor sorrow's poisoned fang.  
Ah! thro the dream breaks slow the sullen clang  
Of tolling bells, and stifled sobs whose pain  
Beats ocean-wise against the rock of death.  
The wailing voices cease, the weary feet  
Pass by, and thro the silence, hushed, and far,  
Floats, tremulous with joy, the wistful breath  
Of that unearthly music, grown more sweet,  
Dying in beauty like a setting star.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

SONG OF THE SNOW ELVES

Come to us, traveller, under the snow,  
Under the fairy snow,  
Our faces are pale as a moonlit rose;  
But the lonely dove, when the south wind blows,  
Is never so sweetly voiced and slow  
As we who dwell in the gentle snow,  
Under the fairy snow.

Here the shadows are blue as the sapphire stone,  
Under the gleaming snow,  
And from diamond cressets the light is thrown  
Upon frosted flowers that are fairer grown  
Since they left the gardens that mortals know  
To bloom again where the frost ferns grow,  
Under the gleaming snow.

O traveller, leave them their fretted world,  
And come to the dreaming snow;  
As in a harbor torn sails are furled,  
As in the calyx soft leaves are curled,  
So hearts may rest from their ancient woe  
In the silvered walls of the world of snow,  
In the halls of the dreaming snow.

There is never a tear that may pass the gate,  
The pearléd gate of the snow;  
The haunting madness that men call hate,  
And the anguish of love that wakes too late,  
Are but vanished dreams in the silken glow  
That shines on the towers of the city of snow,  
The carven towers of the snow.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

O traveller, weary, and all foredone,  
Rest in the shining snow;  
Much have you striven, and little won,  
And long is the course that is yet to run  
For the fragile wreath that is all they show,  
Frail as a flower that is drawn in snow,  
Frailer than sun-touched snow.

O traveller, trust us, our spells are strong,  
And under the happy snow  
You shall dwell content, and shall smile ere long  
At the frenzied righting of frenzied wrong  
That held you fast in its duteous show,  
Ere you heard the magic voice of the snow,  
The song of the happy snow.



## THE WHITE HORSE

Beggarman, what have you seen today? —

I saw the king when the king rode by  
On a fair white horse that is great and gay,  
The best in the kingdom to fight or fly.

How did our king look, beggarman? —

His lips were pale as a dying rose,  
But he smiled as a king or a player can,  
And the thought of the heart there is no man knows.

Beggarman, how did the battle go? —

It went as wind from a stormy sky  
Where the wicked lightnings flicker and flow,  
And souls like dry leaves came whirling by.

Died our young king on a stricken field? —

By the faith of my soul there were less to weep  
Had he been borne on his dinted shield  
To the kirk where his fathers sleep.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

Where did he perish then, beggarman? —  
On the bank where the mill wheel turns;  
Eh, but smoothly the white horse ran,  
With his feet like snow on the dusky ferns.

Was never a holy friar at hand? —  
There was one who wore the hood.  
May none like him at my death-bed stand,  
To housel me with my blood!

Know ye, beggarman, where the body lies? —  
Ask the wolf where he drags his prey.  
The good white horse was swift and wise,  
But death more swift this weary day.

Had that dark stranger borne wrong or scorn? —  
None knoweth, and none can tell  
If he were man of a woman born,  
Or a wandering fiend from hell.

## SUNDRY HOPES IN REGARD TO HEAVEN

### I

I hope there is a queer  
Candle-lighted room,  
Where one sips coffee from a clear  
Fragile cup in the gloom,  
While the clever souls arrive.  
And when one's luck is very good  
Hears St. Paul and Socrates  
Saying anything they please.  
Things it was no use to say  
When they were alive;  
Or things they said in playful mood  
With such arch and airy looks  
That folk left them out of books  
For the junkman, Time, to cart away.

THE AGATE LAMP

II

I hope the beasties will be there  
As they were in Noah's ark,  
The elephant and hare,  
The eagle and the lark;  
But if we should have to choose,  
Horses and dogs we could not lose.  
Delicate nostrils, questioning ears,  
Coquettish prancings, and pretty fears,  
Eager nickerings, musical beat  
On pavement or turf of restless feet.  
The treasuring of beauty  
Is no less than Christian duty,  
And how could we be happy — quite —  
Remembering this lost delight?  
Beseeching paws, and sparkling eyes,  
So sagely merry, so sweetly wise,  
Gentle in play, bold in defense;  
Love, and ardour, and innocence,  
So much of grace and good about them  
That heaven were less itself without them.

### III

I hope that somewhere on the shores  
Of heaven (I have earned  
This arrangement) all the bores  
    May be carefully interned  
To talk together endlessly.  
Think, how happy they will be!

### IV

I hope there is a berry patch  
Where the black-masked yellow throat  
Flings his tantalizing note  
As he flutters like a snatch  
Of sunshine thro the leaves;  
Where on warm and lingering eves  
We, or any worthy soul,  
May find raspberries as sweet  
As the ones we used to eat  
When earth was gay.  
And when we've laid them to our mind  
In our nicest company bowl

*THE AGATE LAMP*

With tiny stars around the brim,  
We will see if we can find  
The Little Dipper, and we'll skim  
The Milky Way.

V

I hope there is a grassy bit  
Where the story-tellers sit,  
Sit cross-legged on the ground  
With their audience around,  
Just as we have seen them do  
In our happy wanderings thro  
Beautiful Damascus town.  
Not one of all the worthy brood  
With jaded pen and earnest frown  
Who try so hard to do us good,  
But only those delightful elves  
Who simply could not help themselves.  
Plautus, and that merry Greek,  
Bird-loving Aristophanes,  
Bringing smiles to every cheek  
With the angels' oddities;

Dumas, of course, and Walter Scott,  
And all the shining, starveling lot  
Who sang the ballads, grave and gay,  
That have blossomed since the day  
When Rhyming Thomas went away.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### A BALLAD OF LOVE AND HATE

Two pilgrims rode through the paling light,  
Two through the fading day,  
And one was dight like a wealthy knight,  
And one like a palmer grey.

Then gleamed before them an ancient tower,  
With a porter at the gate;  
“ We come as lords to thy own lord’s power,”  
They said: “ We are Love and Hate.”

Prince Aymel gathered his wise men there,  
Ere ever the night grew late,  
And bade them give him an answer fair  
To the message of Love and Hate.

“ Now tell me this by your hope of fame,  
And tell me this ere long,  
For it will be to our lasting shame  
If we should choose awrong.”



Then out from among the eldern lords  
Spake one whose beard was grey,  
Who ever had loved to speak riddling words,  
And walk in the hidden way.

“ If you would know of your choice this day,  
There is little better and nothing worse;  
Yet from Hate have I seen men ride away,  
But Love they will cling to — and curse.”

But stoutly against his words they hold,  
As stoutly as mortals might,  
Crying that Love was a thing of gold,  
And the lord of all delight.

“ Yea,” said the Prince, “ ye have praised his name,  
And made him many a song,  
But ye choose tonight by a torch’s flame,  
And how if you choose awrong? ”

*THE AGATE LAMP*

With many a word they answered there,  
And many a smile of scorn,  
“ Have we not seen him and known him fair?  
We knew him ere thou wast born.”

“ Unbar the gates,” the counsellors cried,  
“ Unbar the gates with speed,  
The way must be wide for a king to ride,  
And Love is a king, indeed.

“ And this is he in a king’s array,  
On his charger bright and brown;  
Love does not stray through the dusty way  
In a palmer’s ashen gown.”

There close at hand did Prince Aymel stand  
To honour his guest’s high state,  
But quickly the palmer seized his hand  
And drew him without the gate.

“ Now vain, false wight, is thy wicked might,  
I will not go with thee,  
For still to lord Love my faith I plight! ”  
Quoth the palmer, “ I am he.”

“ He who they said was a monster dread,  
Have they chosen him in thy place? ”  
“ There be many who name my name,” Love said,  
“ Who never saw my face.

“ But come, for see, like an opening flower,  
The star that tells of day,  
And we will forget the ancient tower  
When we walk the greenwood way.”

THE BURIAL OF ATTLA

They came to rouse him from his sleep,  
The bridal sleep of Attila;  
    A wondering fear swept o'er the throng  
To find his slumber grown so deep;  
    He stirred not for his minstrel's song,  
The song best loved of Attila.

"It is like watching at a tomb,"  
Quoth the folk of Attila.  
    And bold with dread his captains came,  
Lighting the dusk and silent room  
    With flashing steel and eyes of flame,  
Eyes that sought for Attila.

They lifted high upon their shields  
The grim-looking corse of Attila;  
    "Where is our lion's fitting den?  
Each muddy patch of dull earth yields  
    A common grave for common men,  
But where's a grave for Attila?"

They wrought a chest of ruddy gold,  
The blood-washed gold of Attila,  
    Wrought it well for the mighty dead,  
Wrapped it in silver, fold on fold,  
    Sheathed it last in a pall of lead,  
Dark as the sins of Attila.

Prisoners toiled with pick and spade,  
(Prisoners ta'en by Attila)  
    Turned the river from its path,  
Drew it down where the grass had swayed,  
    White with foam in its sullen wrath,  
One captive more for Attila.

They made his grave in the river's bed,  
A deep, deep grave for Attila,  
    And brought its waters back again.  
"For it is well," the captains said,  
    " That he should lie as none have lain,  
There being none like Attila.

But not so well that any slave,  
(Hosts have died for Attila)

Tell his cowed foemen where he lies,  
Lest they who fled him mock his grave."

When they had hushed the latest cries  
The waves were red o'er Attila.

## TO ARIEL

Over the meadows of cowslip bloom,  
Over the shimmering stretches of sea,  
Over the wide forest's sun-shot gloom,  
Sweetest of fairies, come home to me!  
Passing so lightly the guarded towers,  
Into the palace where hatred cowers,  
Come with the breath of our island flowers,  
Daintiest Ariel, come to me.

Milan is mine, so the courtiers say,  
Palace, and armies, and lands in fee.  
(Yellowing sands where the sea nymphs play;  
Ah, how the dreams have come home to me!)  
Never a tear in your winsome eyes,  
Never a memory you may prize,  
Never a thought of my wistful sighs,  
Nor a wish to come home to me;

*THE AGATE LAMP*

Not as you came when my spells had bound you,  
Dimming a little your birdlike glee,  
Come to me now as tho love had found you,  
    Dearest of fairies, come home to me.  
Men have forgotten my love in my power,  
Souls cannot thrive in a spear-circled tower;  
Voiced like a flute, aye, and faced like a flower,  
    Loveliest Ariel, come to me!



## THE RECALL OF THE COCHRAN PLACKS

The sun smiled down on a king's array,  
And flashed from a kingdom's swords,  
When thro the bright morning proud Cochran rode  
To meet with the Scottish lords.

For a page had told him, " At Lauder church  
The Scottish nobles are."  
" And what do they there," bold Cochran cried,  
" Without the earl of Mar? "

The people murmured to see him pass  
With a hundred men at his back,  
For they hated him sore for the murdered earl,  
And worse for the Cochran plack.

He listened in scorn to the muttered hate,  
And lazily smiled and spoke,  
" That money ye love not shall be recalled —  
On the day I am hanged, good folk! "

*THE AGATE LAMP*

Then he turned in the saddle laughing,  
While answering laughter came,  
For the men who followed him served for gold  
And cared no whit for his fame.

Black velvet robed him from cap to spur,  
Black velvet and silver sheen,  
With a hunting horn on a golden chain  
Had half ransomed a captive queen.

His own right hand unlatched the door,  
His own hand flung it far,  
And his own voice cried as he stepped within,  
“ My lords, ’tis the lord of Mar! ”

Then lightly Lord Grey to the Douglas turned,  
With a mock on lips and brow,  
“ The mice were bold when the cat was far,  
But the cat is among them now! ”

“ The worse for him,” quoth the grim old earl;  
“ Hunter of mischief, thy hunt is o’er,  
Betake thee to prayer if thou knowest one,  
For in faith thy need is sore.”

Careless the answer Cochran made  
Over his heart’s despair;  
“ Strange is this greeting, but stranger still  
That the Douglas speaks of prayer.”

“ Ay, truly,” said Archibald, “ for I think  
Thy prayers have little power,  
But our ropes are strong, and, by St. Bride,  
Thou shalt know it within this hour.”

Then Cochran beckoned his arméd men,  
But their eyes were dark with doubt,  
For they feared the nobles within the church  
And the vassals who stood without.

## THE AGATE LAMP

He turned him again with a scornful smile,  
“ My lords, if you tie my hands,  
Of your courtesy do it with silken ropes,  
I like not these hempen bands.”

Lord Grey laughed loud, but the Douglas frowned.  
“ 'Twere an honour to thy foul corse  
To let it hang from the halter rope  
That had tethered my meanest horse.”

. . . . .  
Ere the gloaming fell were the placks recalled,  
And the people, before they slept,  
Talked of the promise that Cochran made,  
And Archibald Douglas kept.

## QUEEN MARIE

Yes, I can tell you of her if you'll loiter here and wait;  
I can tell the strangest happenings for as simple as I  
stand,  
Tho the neighbors never guess it, those who gossip at my  
gate,  
And the best of all my memories, is —— the Queen  
o' Fairyland.

They told us she came from the coasts of France, nay,  
but from Fairyland,  
There never was one like her that came of a mortal line;  
The red rose gave her the fragrant lips, and the lily the  
wee white hand,  
And the stars grew pale with wonder before her lovely  
eyne.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

I was just a 'prentice cobbler when I saw the Queen ride  
past,

And the master called me idle, tho it's little I could  
care;

His eyes were scarcely lifted from his leather and his last,  
But mine were happy prisoners, like the pearls amid  
her hair.

I'd a wife, the best o' women, and children two or three,  
And I'd seldom thought to envy any lord that e'er  
drew breath,

But I'd envy for the silken lads who rode with Queen  
Marie,

Tho a sudden whisper told me that they rode the way  
to death.

They glanced along the highway like a flight of wandering  
stars,

And she amid them smiling, like the crescent moon of  
May.

How should she guess at the sullen strength of English  
prison bars,

She, who played with her lovers' hearts as a child with  
kneaded clay?

Minstrels twain from over the sea, and the Scots lords  
that you know;—

Francis bringing a kingly name, and Douglas a kingly  
heart. —

There's never a lass o' the middle earth can hold her  
lovers so,

They'll love you well in the sunshine, but in the storm  
they'll part.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

There was never a heart that beat 'gainst hers but  
Death's hand stilled it soon,  
And never a lover kissed her lips but he found Death's  
poison there;  
Yet the men who saw her smiled at fate, and flung their  
souls for a boon,  
And 'twas said the blood shed for her flushed the  
pearls that bound her hair.

That was but a foolish fancy, and I've many such at hand.  
You've heard the elfin story of the gentle Rhymer's  
fate?  
I've sometimes thought my soul went with her back to  
Fairyland,  
Tho the neighbors never guess it when they gossip  
at my gate.



## THE SERPENT CHARMER

Upon a mat of woven grass  
He sits, just where all folk may pass,  
    Singing ever the same faint rhyme.  
No branch to shield him, no gnarléd root,  
Only the rhyme and a dreaming flute  
    To hold him free of the serpent, Time.

*How will he take, when the music foils  
    Him no longer, the song-spent breath,  
The slow embrace of the tightened coils,  
    Or the swifter kiss of the painted Death?*

THE AGATE LAMP

And ever with laughter the people pass  
The conjurer, crouched on his mat of grass,  
    Throwing a coin to him now and then.

“ The serpent is old and tame, no doubt,  
And of a surety his fangs are out.”  
    For this is the wisdom of mortal men.

*Will they smile when the silken music fails,  
    When the soft, slow words no longer fall,  
When the rose-flushed melody droops and pales,  
    And the snake is freed from the charmer's thrall?*

Many to smile, and a few to sigh,  
“ Ah, the dread of that baleful eye,  
    And the loathly grace of the swaying head!  
Away, away, that we may not see  
The enamelled coils of this mystery,  
    Nor his eyes like those of the wicked dead! ”

*But what of the charmer who hears the cry,  
    Nor ever ceases his fluting low,  
Nor ever perils by vain reply  
    The subtle spell he is weaving slow?*

He remembers a bygone holyday  
When, swift on the dust-dim highway,  
    Another serpent charmer came.  
Was it glance of eye, was it flutter of hands?  
He never knew, but he understands,  
    In the fashion souls may claim.

*Then his song grows sweet as a wind-tossed flower,  
    For the lifting of lonely dread,  
And the serpent sways to the growing power,  
    Drooping the pride of his venomed head.*

## THE AGATE LAMP

### GRAMERCY

Love, you have made me free of all the lands of Faërie,

I have tasted elfin food, and sipped their richest dew,

Wee voices bade me tarry,

With words so sweet and airy,

As seems forgotten music grown sweeter than we knew.

'Twas you who flung so wide the silver-shining gate,

And led my soul, elate,

Through the dawn of the fairy day,

In robes of purple splendour along the moonlight way.

Love, you have made me free of Camelot and Tyre,

The ancient streets grow young again in answer to my  
need,

Happy lovers wander there with myrtle twinéd lyre,

And their sighs are turned to music by the cunning of  
the reed;

Their dark eyes shine

With the light in thine;

And as kindly they gaze on me,

As the gracious moon on the panting sea,

The slim young moon on the restless sea.

Love, you have made me free of all the spirit lands,  
Where sad, sweet voices sing of loves that vanished  
    long ago,  
Sighing over faded hours  
As we o'er faded flowers,  
With passionate refrains that cling like clasping hands;  
Where noon and night  
Are a vague delight,  
White pearls on a thread of sorrow,  
As they come and go  
In their subtle flow,  
    Like the mystic tide of a dreaming sea,  
While a piercing sweetness  
And strange completeness  
Of melody thrills through the glimmering air,  
Drowning the echoes of pain and care,  
Till they falter and die,  
Till they soar and fly,  
    In changeful and excellent harmony.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

JOYEUSE GARDE

When first I came to Joyeuse Garde  
White clouds were drifting by,  
And their heaven was not more clear  
Than the earth and the placid mere.  
An elfin song of elfin cheer  
The lark's voice seemed upon the ear,  
And happily I made reply,  
When first I came to Joyeuse Garde.

When that I dwelt in Joyeuse Garde  
There were no clouds at all,  
The sun ne'er seemed so well content  
With buttress gray or battlement;  
And where the rose and ivy blent  
Through open lattices they went  
To gladden bower and princely hall,  
When that I dwelt in Joyeuse Garde.

When I went forth from Joyeuse Garde  
Some evil thing had chanced,  
The lark was dumb, the roses dead,  
Within the ivy screech owls bred;  
The casements peered like eyes of dread  
Into the evening's stormy red.  
About me fearfully I glanced  
When I went forth from Joyeuse Garde.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### A NAME

Between two fluttering leaves I caught  
The glitter of a name, —  
Montrose.

The book was not about him,  
Nor about anything in particular,  
But there sparkled the name, ennobling the whole day,  
Sending a flash of courage thro tired veins,  
Reminding the discouraged soul  
That folk were not all mouse-coloured and given to sly  
    gnawing,  
Nor wolfishly eager to run in packs,  
Nor looking wise over badly roasted peanuts  
Whose very possession they owed to benevolent passers-  
    by.

It was as tho one cut across a vacant lot,  
Expecting disagreeable odours and cockle burrs,  
And brick-bats and tin cans,  
With possibly a snake,  
And came suddenly upon a fallen star  
Among the weeds,  
Marvellously unbroken and scintillant.



The ancients who were wise enough to feel  
That powerful magic lived in names  
Are dead,  
And it is fashionable now to smile  
Politely and with condescension at such thoughts.  
Well, — there's the name I saw,  
Purple and glorious as battle flags,  
And bright as steel,  
Deepening the breath like a sea wind.  
You have full leave to smile at me;  
I am as free to pity you.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

TRIBUTE

He who would touch our thoughts to nobleness  
Need crave no artistry of words. Instead,  
Voicing a glory flung too high for praise,  
Let him say "France,"—and all is said.

## THE VOYAGERS

### I

Past a shining tower we came,  
Beautiful and beckoning;  
Long we held at anchor there,  
Marvelling that castle rare  
Should be left to mariner  
Who chose to claim,  
But we feared the reckoning.  
Winds were fitful, cliffs were high,  
In every wave that hurtled by  
Flickered the spears of death —  
    Yet we passed it with a sigh,  
And for the breathing of a breath  
    No man met another's eye.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### II

Flashing white among dark trees  
Rose a shaft of stone,  
Slender, radiant as flame.  
The land was delicate and tame  
Save for those demonic trees  
Brooding their evil mysteries.  
Their shadow dripped upon the ground,  
Thick, palpable as clotted blood.  
Whatever name we carved or found  
Upon that gleaming stone  
How *should* the land be good? —  
What bird had flown  
Across the grove to blast it thus? —  
Thought nor recked we then of shame,  
For the dark trees daunted us.

### III

Now we are content at sea,  
Seek nor shaft nor tower;  
For dead hope we have no tear,  
We can smile at ancient fear,  
Fling regretful memory  
As we fling a flower.  
To the open ports we go,  
Buy the merchandise all buy,  
Have no wares we may not show  
In every market-place.  
Once a proudly questing eye,  
Once a wild song's flying grace,  
Remembered us of shaft and tower; —  
Lightly now we put them by,  
Deeply feed, and softly lie;  
They have had their hour.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

FORVYE SANDS

The ancient Laird of Forvyne  
Upon his death-bed lay,  
“ From Andrew the Reiver’s clutch,” he sighed,  
“ God keep you as He may.”

For he had sheep, and grain in store,  
And gold and gear at hand,  
But few stout men to rise at call,  
For his was a lonely land.

He had oxen upon the field,  
And deer within the glade,  
But the only heir of all his wealth  
Was but a slender maid.

He had not lain upon his bier  
An hour but barely four,  
When Andrew the Reiver and his men  
Came riding to the door.

With glaive and ax they battered down  
The bolts that held it fast;  
The seven tall candles round the bier  
Flickered as he passed.

“ Hold your hand for this one poor night,  
Till we have made our dole;  
Till the bell is rung, and the requiem sung,  
To comfort the parted soul.”

“ We can troll a blithe drinking-song,  
I, and my sturdy crew,  
Will help his sleep as much, I trow,  
As any priest could do.”

She turned her to the outer door,  
To the mirk, and the wind, and the rain,  
But ere her foot passed the threshold o'er,  
She turned her round again.

THE AGATE LAMP

"Listen," she said, and "listen," she said,  
And smiled, and raised her hand;  
"Hark how the wind brings in the sea,  
And the rain sweeps down the land.

If ever a woman's curse had power  
On those who wrought her ill,  
I wish that never a sheaf lie more  
On Forvye dale or hill.

From this black day on the pleasant fields  
Where the golden harvests grew,  
May there be naught but the bitter sand,  
And thistle, and twisted yew."

Nine weary days, nine awful nights,  
The rain went driving by,  
And the screaming winds tore the falling tower  
Like a pack of hounds in cry.



For nine dread days, for nine wild nights,  
The sea devoured the land,  
And when it sank from the Forvyne fields  
They were bleak and barren sand.

. . . . .

Sometimes, they say, on a dark midnight,  
Like a shadow the old tower stands,  
And round it wanders that sad ladye,  
And weeps, and wrings her hands.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

A MINSTREL SINGS

In the Year of Our Lord 1221.

One while I walk a fancied king, one while  
A lovely lady's page;  
I would be hero of some knightly guest,  
Or deeply learned sage.

When painters deal with violet and green  
My hand would blithely paint;  
And when sweet Brother Francis passeth by,  
Then I would be a saint.

But by my faith I have no time for these,  
So fast the songs come whispering;  
And will I, nill I, I must be God's lark,  
He put me here to sing.

## AVE MARIA

'Twas known to all men as the house of hate,  
None took that path who could have found another,  
Yet workmen entering the place of late,  
Saw there a picture of the virgin mother.

There are all sorts of guesses to be made,  
And some have judged the matter one for jeering;  
A few explained it fully, so they said,  
But thro their words the mystery keeps peering.

A soul stirred in that chrysalis of hate,  
And gave it kindly, thrilled with new elation;  
Or bought it, prompted by malicious fate,  
Just to discharge a galling obligation.

Believed a native goodness sure to thrive  
If safely kept from certain well known glances;  
Perhaps the blackest fiend in Satan's hive  
Fancies himself the sport of circumstances.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

A soul that life had cruelly ensnared  
Breathed in that face its tender aspirations;  
To solve the riddle half the village cared,  
But there were riddles in the explanations.

## VALE!

Filling of life where the new grass springs,  
Thrilling of life where the gay lark sings,  
A veil of green o'er the foothills cast,  
A white-throat chanting that winter's past,  
A spray of blossom against the sky,  
And you, and I, —  
(Oh, the days were dear!) —  
Laughing for joy that summer was nigh.

Flicker of wing and flutter of throat,  
Echoing ring of the last sweet note,  
A fleck of snow on the mountain's crest,  
And dead leaves filling the white-throat's nest,  
Only one star when the night winds moan,  
And I, alone, —  
(Oh, the days are drear!) —  
Sighing that love and summer are flown.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

IN THE MARKET-PLACE

There's a man whom the world thinks happy, there's a  
man whom the world calls great,  
The haughtiest bow before him, and the mighty throng  
his gate;  
They bring him gold and golden words, but when their  
gifts are laid,  
I think of a mess of pottage, and the price a hunter paid.

For I knew him before they lured him to their gilded  
prison bars,  
When the birds told him their secrets, and his heart was  
kin to the stars;  
When he loved the steep hill country, and the prairie's  
half opened scroll,  
But most of all the desert, where God had fashioned his  
soul.

O, few there be who never see the world's great market-  
place,  
And he came to it over-weary, after a fruitless chase;  
They meshed his eyes by their merchandise in vase and  
casket and roll,  
And when they saw he had taken naught they bade him  
pay with his soul.

There's woe when a woman sells her flesh, or a sophist  
sells his brain,  
But when a poet sells his soul there is deeper loss and pain;  
Yet they who charm to their lasting harm the things that  
are weak and still  
Are over bold if they think to hold a lion against his will.

He will forget the broken net and the days of captive dole  
When the desert winds sing to him and the great stars  
make him whole;  
And the past shall seem but an evil dream, full paid by  
quick disdain,  
When back from the desert my hunter comes to claim  
his soul again.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

A BALLADE OF BEAUTIFUL HORSES

Tell me, in what shield-covered tower  
    Impatient Sleipnir waits to greet  
The dawn of Asgard's battle hour?  
    In what star radiant retreat  
Does Pegasus, the wide winged, eat  
    The choice of heaven's granary,  
Well pleased to hear the Greeks repeat  
    His prowess in their poetry?



Bucephalus, too fierce and stour,  
Till love had made his pride complete;  
He from whose eyes there fell a shower  
Of loving tears (or else, I weet,  
His poet uses much deceit),  
To grace his master's obsequy;  
They two who paced old London's street,  
White Surrey and Roan Barbary.

Where feed all these? With him whose power  
Brought victory and slew defeat  
At Winchester? What tender flower  
Yields delicate, Elysian meat  
For their soft muzzles, satin sweet?  
And flashing o'er what sunny lea  
Dance bay Motilla's dainty feet,  
Clad in their silver bravery?

#### L'ENVOI

In whatsoever star they meet,  
How glorious so e'er they be,  
I know a wise horse, fair and fleet,  
Worthy that noble company.

## THE AGATE LAMP

### AFTER READING KIT MARLOWE'S PLAYS

In a world of dream and desire surges a passionate sea  
Where ships like meteors pass in a glory of shattered  
stars,  
And only the tall cliffs know how eager the waves may be  
To snatch from a trophied galleon the splendour of  
ancient wars.

The soaring sun and the cliffs have kiss'd,  
And the cold rocks blossomed with amethyst;  
Sunbeam and topaz have mingled their rays,  
And the earth is aglimmer with chrysoprase.

Rich in illustrious spaces quaint colored cities stand,  
Watching the strange dark rivers flow down to that  
ultimate sea,  
While high o'er their vivid turrets float the banners of  
the land,  
White with loveliness, golden with wealth, and purple  
with mystery.

About the river that clearliest flows  
Spring fragrant arbours of jasmine and rose;  
And the lily buds wake when night draws near  
Over valleys of primrose and eglantere.

Above the city, above the sea, an immortal star sweeps  
by,  
Fulfilling the tremulous air with an exquisite dream of  
light,  
And swift, and sweet, from the loftiest tower a voice  
makes cadenced cry,  
Hymning the joy of city and sea in the star's celestial  
flight.

MUCKLE-MOUTHED MEG

“ What will you do with the handsome knight  
Whom your men led home in chains? ”

“ What should I do, dame,” quoth Elibank’s laird,  
“ But hang him for his pains?

“ He was the boldest at foray or fight  
On whom the moon doth shine,  
But he has harried the last of my men,  
And lifted the last of my kine.”

“ There is little of wisdom in that,” she said,  
“ I tell you frank and true,  
For a paltry spite to awake the might  
Of Hardin and Buccleuch.

When we have daughters three unwed,  
And never a one that’s fair,  
Would you be so little a man of wit  
To slaughter Hardin’s bonny heir?

Sir William is the handsomest man  
Doth on the marches ride,  
And our poor Meg the ugliest maid  
Within the country side,  
Yet I trow he will sooner wed than hang,  
Tho muckle-mouthed Meg were bride."

They asked him once, they asked him twice,  
" I had liefer hang," laughed he;  
But when they asked him his will again,  
'Twas under the gallows tree.

" Tho the marriage noose should gall its worst,  
I think it may hardly kill,  
And granted Meg's mouth be rarely wide,  
The grave gapes wider still."

*THE AGATE LAMP*

SOLOMON'S ARMYE

Kyng Solomon, hys armye,  
Was wondrouslye beseene,  
A setting forth of leopard,  
Of ounce, and wolveryne;  
Foxes were hys counsellours,  
Hys couryers were deere,  
The faces of hys lyones  
Wynged hys foes wyth fear.  
There myghte bee seene the apysh trybes  
Arraying for the fyeld,  
Wyth bended bowes and arrowes keene,  
Wyth sword lykewyse and shyeld,  
The whyle in furyous fashyon  
Each beates hys breaste and synges  
Of how hys myghtye prowesse  
Hath vanquished myghte kyngs,  
There flashed the rypplyng broken lyghte  
Upon the tyger's bars,  
There moved the hornéd ryver horse,  
And panthers, and jaguars.

The redd glance of the buffaloe,  
The boar's whyte tuskéd glare,  
The awefulle mystery of strengthe  
In elefaunte and beare.  
Theyre tramplyngs shooke the heartes of men,  
And terryblye they spoke,  
No paynim kyng durst meddle  
With Solomon hys folke.

Kyng Solomon, hys armye,  
Was a marvell to have hearde,  
For there rose uppe the goodlye speech  
Of every wingéd byrde.  
By daye the swallowes swept the skye,  
The owles patrolled the nyghte,  
The herons alle were sentinelles  
To guard 'gainst sudden fryghte.  
A lusty troop of pelycans  
Bare pouches fylled wyth foode,  
And in the camp were weavers  
And those who worked in woode.



*THE AGATE LAMP*

There was the prydefulle countenance  
Of eagle bothe and hawke,  
Who of combat and of glory  
Dydde make theyre daylye talke.  
Men were none who myght endure  
Clutch of talones, blowe of wynges,  
Deavying cryes and whetted beakes  
For the sake of paynim kynges.  
The byrdes rose uppe lyke wynd blowne leaves,  
Lyke cloudes made dark the sunne;  
The kynges cast ashes on theyre heades  
Before the byrdes of Solomon.

Solomon hadde an armye  
Whose lyke has never beene,  
A gatheryng of Afrites,  
Of Goblynnes and of Jinn.



Sometymes as wee as mydges,  
Anon more huge than trees;  
Theyre voyces lyke a torrent's roar,  
Agayne lyke hummyng bees.  
They called to one another  
By theyre astoundyng names,  
And twixt theyre fencyng ivory teethe  
Breathed laughter mixed wyth flames.  
Theyre weapones were enchantments,  
Dyre spells, and monstrosous charmes,  
Where bye the vyc tymys presentlye  
Dydde suffer grievous harmes.  
At tymes they walked as earthlye men,  
Then shotte uppe gyantes drear,  
And vanyshed into thunder cloudes,  
At whyche folke dyed of fear.  
They harryed alle the paynim kynges  
In persone and in pelf,  
None dared to looke upon the band  
Save Solomon hymself.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

Kyng Solomon, hys armye,  
Was lyke devouryng fyre,  
Spearmen out of Saba,  
And saylor laddes from Tyre.  
Brave in golden necklets  
Lyon hunters came,  
Lured from dystant Ethyope  
Bye Solomon, hys fame.  
Archers from Mounte Libanone,  
And slyngers from the playne,  
Cavelyers of Egypte,  
Reaped hys foes lyke grayne.  
And when the kyng was pleased to ryde  
Hys guards about hym paced,  
In tunycs of the purple dye,  
Bye golden beltes embraced.  
They were more large than common men,  
More large, and mucche more fayre;  
Theyre sword hylts blazed wyth emeralds,  
Wyth gold dust shone theyre hayre.

The horses were as swift as thought,  
And eache as whyte as mylke,  
And alle were shodde wyth sylver,  
And alle were trapped wyth sylke.  
The paynim kynges were famous lordes,  
And loftylye could boaste,  
But alle theyre spyryt fledde before  
Kyng Solomon, hys hoste.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

THE WEARY SOUL

A weary soul sank down, dismayed, at heaven's gate,  
and wept;

"Ye did not well to take me from the hillside where I  
slept,

The kind trees spoke in whispers that they might not  
break my rest,

But you have snatched me from it, and tell me I am  
blest."

The angels they were troubled, sore troubled all the  
band,

The angels were indignant for the honour of their  
land,

But the good Lord Jesus laughed at them, "I do  
remember me

Of certain lovely hillsides where I walked in Galilee;

Also I know the weariness that healeth best alone."  
The weary soul was comforted, and ceased his heavy  
moan,  
Saying to the angels, " Leave me in these outer fields,  
For I crave naught but quietness of all that heaven  
yields."

The happy souls looked at him with infinite amaze,  
They talked about him wistfully throughout their  
joyous days;  
They brought him budded roses, and told him where  
they grew,  
They brought him spicy breathing pinks, and lilies  
blanched with dew.

Child angels came on tiptoe, with interesting things,  
Kittens chasing meteors, and doves in rainbow swings,  
Their very dearest dog, fresh braided star wreaths  
round his ears; —  
The weary soul smiled at them, but the smile was  
worse than tears.

*THE AGATE LAMP*

He nestled like a hunted lark within the long, warm  
grass,  
He saw the slow, white, noiseless clouds, like phantom  
carvels, pass;  
He watched the brave ant people building vast historic  
towns,  
Or seeking, round an unsung Troy, the conqueror's  
laurel crowns.

He saw the large-eyed beetles gleaming in enamelled  
mail,  
He heard the blackbird's challenge, and the sweet flute-  
throated quail,  
He watched the veined grass bending as the wind's light  
feet went by,  
He counted every fairy plume upon the butterfly.

And night by night the faithful stars enringed the  
weary soul;  
He saw the mist-cloaked Rider, and his bright Horse  
guard the pole,  
He saw the heavenly Ship glide past, star foam curling  
from her prow,  
He saw a great king planet frontlet Taurus' lordly  
brow.

He lay in pools of moonlight till his aching cares were  
gone,  
After cruel thirst of beauty drank the colours of the  
dawn. —  
And all the wondering angels saw the weary soul made  
glad,  
And all the puzzled angels thro their wonderment were  
glad.



THE TROUBADOUR WOULD BE FORGIVEN  
HIS NEGLECT

Ah, fair sir God, I pray Thee pardon me  
My too unkindly slighted minstrelsy!  
Thou knowest well for why my lips are mute,  
My pens unpointed, and unstrung my lute,  
Thou know'st my gentle lord is dead, who heard  
With sweetest courtesy each little word  
Of mine; yea, in the palace of his heart  
Gave them imperial lodging, far apart  
The careless world. Also, if they were bare  
Of gracious raiment, he would give them vair,  
And sendal, scarlet say, and loops of pearl.  
O, thou vile death, most foul dispiteous churl,  
Are there not those who shame the world too long,  
That thou must slay my lord, and slay the song  
Unborn upon my lips! Of what avail  
If I should hush the very nightingale,  
Now that my lord no longer heareth me?  
Thus have I spoken, very evilly.



I said, Heaven wills my viol should be broken,  
I said, Heaven wills my songs should be unspoken,  
And all the while I did not touch a string,  
And all the while I did not strive to sing.  
Natheless, I ask Thee, of Thy courtesy,  
To think the wizard, grief, hath blinded me;  
Else, if a great king, seeing my lord's grace  
Deserved a loftier, more courtly place,  
Had summoned him in haste, as having need  
Of his approvéd valour and wise rede,  
Would I have gathered villainous words to pelt  
His stately herald with? Nay, while I dwelt  
Alone, with blithe good cheer I would have made  
Rondels and madrigals to be displayed  
Unto my lord and that wise king. This good,  
Indeed, my lord, by his wise hardihood  
And knightly gentleness, has well attained,  
Yet I, disloyal servitor, have plained  
My selfish loneliness. Choose, oh my King,  
Among Thy angels one of swiftest wing,  
To bear a message to my lord. Is he  
Not first of Thy resplendent chivalry,  
Or captain of the lady Mary's guard?

*THE AGATE LAMP*

No matter where, he will not think it hard  
To pause and listen, royally serene.  
Thy messenger shall say, my rhymes have been  
Imprisoned in my heart, by sorcery  
I well believe, but now they are set free,  
And tho, poor captives! they are weak of wing,  
They have not utterly forgot to sing.  
And tell him there remain two things I crave,  
To make a song sweeter than yet I have,  
A song that shall be like a ring of gold,  
Wrought nobly and with subtle craft, to hold  
The jewel of his name, and then, that I,  
Having no farther need of life, may die.







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Oct. 2009

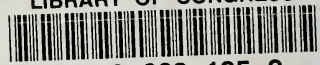
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